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ABSTRACT

Information and observations about Korean history, religion, philosophy, and culture, and their influence on Korean Americans' intellectual and psychological characteristics are provided in this paper. The author contends that although many Korean Americans have been in the United States for several generations, all members of this group reflect their cultural heritage and that, therefore, it is necessary to understand the heritage in order to understand this population. Self-identity, self-perception, and behavior patterns of Korean Americans are related, in particular, to the philosophical structures of eastern religions. The family system is also said to be influential. Finally, ways that Korean Americans perceive American culture and ways of life are discussed. (GC)

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SOCIOCULTURAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE KOREAN PEOPLE: A TEACHERS' REFERENCE GUIDE IN THE LEVELS OF THE ELEMENTARY, SECONDARY AND POSTSECONDARY STUDENTS

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SOCIO-CULTURAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE KOREAN PEOPLE

Korean-Americans are imbued with American dreams and purpose in the United States. For this reason, an understanding of Korean-Americans will not suffice with an empirical description of them. On the other hand this study should bring forth a rational projection into the pursuit of unity in diversities, which is to require an intellectual in-depth understanding of Korean-Americans beyond a composite of facts.

A historical significance of Korean immigration into the United States embodies the following characteristics:

(1) a strong sense of purpose to cope with the Korean Independence Movement from the Japanese occupation in 1910;

(2) the sense of purpose psychologically developed Korean immigrants' obsessive pride in being uniquely Korean different from other Asians;

(3) the historical meaning of Korean-Americans is to enrich a sense of participation in both Americanism

and Americanization in light of the pursuit of harmony in conflict characterized with Korean philosophy and traditional culture.

Roughly speaking, the types of Korean-Americans can be divided into the following;

(1) first Korean immigrants of nationalistic fever from 1903 to 1919; and before and during World War II;

(2) Korean immigrants who came as foreign students during and after the Korean War;

(3) Korean immigrants who came to this country for the sake of their business expansion during the early 1970's industrial and economic boom in Korea; and

(4) those coming to this country for their family invitation.

These four types of immigrants have their different purposes for coming to this country; but for most Korean-Americans in common their transitional purpose in coming to this country should be accomplished by noble American dreams. To understand Korean-American dreams and purposes, it is my contention that the

following three assumptions and facts are most fundamental for an understanding of Korean-Americans:

(1) Korean-Americans should be considered as still living in the period of first generation Koreans, and therefore their heritage from traditional Korea cannot be ignored;

(2) it is important to focus on an academic intellectual landscape of continuity in understanding Korean-Americans from Korea to America, involving conflicts in adjustment and a semantic confusion of rationalistic and emotional behavior patterns; this confusion can be dealt with in terms that "nationalistic" designates an intellectual pursuit of putting different ideas and oneself together in a coherent system, and furthermore in terms that "emotional" is quite often attached to a humanistic and moralistic appreciation of human values; and

(3) the fresh and ideal perspective of Americanization can be pursued through a creative, ethnic understanding of Korean-Americans.

With this in mind, a discussion of subject matter with its various sub-divisions will follow.

I

GEOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE KOREAN PEOPLE

As a race, the Korean people are often considered the most homogeneous people in the world. Often the socio-cultural and psychological backgrounds of the Korean people are emphasized in terms of the geographical characteristics of Korea. It is doubtful, however, how far the geographical features of Korea may have influenced the Korean people.

Korea is a mountainous peninsula, forming a typical synthesis of continental character and oceanic character, and also her geographical condition allows us to imagine significant changes of the Korean people's mind through the pursuit of harmony in conflict. Identity in contrast can be regarded as a symbolic term of the Korean people.

Korea is about 600 miles long and 135 miles wide, located in northeastern Asia and projecting southeast from Manchuria.

Japan is about 120 miles away from Korea to the east. The Republic of Korea is about 38,000 square miles. Seoul, the capital city of Korea, is located in the west-central area of the peninsula, less than 30 miles from the demilitarized zone of the 38th Parallel dividing Korea into the Republic of South Korea and the Communist North Korea. The climate of Korea is both extremely hot and cold, with a long period of the rainy season in late June and July. The flag of the Republic of South Korea is most symbolic in its nature to explain all the universal phenomena of changes. The inclusive nature of the flag has a peculiar meaning attached to the complexity of the Korean people.

II

THE PRE-HISTORIC FORM OF THE IDEAL SOCIETY: "HONG IK INGAHN"

The Korean mentality is so complex as to consist of such religious influences from Shamanism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Christianity. The earliest mytheological legend of Korea, however, was extremely modern in view of its democratic and utilitarian perspectives of the

Ideal Society known as "Hong Ik Ingahn" that literally designates the expansion of human interest and humanity. The foundation of Korean democracy was based on humanity, while the utilitarian concern with the Ideal Society was based on the idea of the greatest happiness for the greatest number of the people. What is most interesting as to the Korean mentality is to lie on the consistency that always ideas of Korean thought are in conflict through all stages of life, yet leading to the pursuit of harmony.

"Hong Ik Ingahn" is one of the first utilitarian ideas in the world. Utilitarianism versus a humanistic pursuit of value and inner-consciousness was to be reconciled in the most primitive pre-historic legend of Dangun, founder of the pre-historic Korea, who advocated "Hong Ik Ingahn". This type of reconciliation is an on-going characteristic of the Korean people in today's world regardless of whether they reside in Korea or elsewhere. It is historically important to note that the prehistoric idealogy of "Hong Ik Ingahn" dates back to the twenty-fourth century B.C., and is quite modern in view of old Korean socio-cultural mentality. It can be said that the socio-cultural and psychological characteristics of

the Korean people is hermeneutic in light of digging into the in-depth psychology of man and the world. Just to realize the mentioned characteristics of the Korean people, it will be, I hope, worthwhile to take a minute of thought in having a sense of empathy with historical aspects of the Korean people.

III

A HISTORICAL DEPICTION OF THE KOREAN PEOPLE

In order to understand the socio-cultural and psychological characteristics of the Korean people, it will be fruitful to find out a meaningful corelation between a historical out-look of the Korean Kingdom and the socio-cultural mentality of the Korean people. The legendary founder of the Ideal Society "Hong Ik Ingahn", Danguu, is said to have descended from heaven to establish a tribal state. The legend of Danguu coincides in its legendary nature and time with the Chinese and Greek myth of "bear anscestory". The bear is an animal-symbol of patience. In the name of "bear-symbol", the California state flag should remind the reader much of pacifically and internationally creative ideals embodied by Californians.

For a long period of two milleniums after the foundation of Danguu Chosun (a tribal state of Dangunn), the story of ancient Korea is told by the vicissitudes of various tribal states. The main current of Korean history, however, begins with the appearance in the first century B.C. of the Three Kingdoms--Koguryeo, Baekje, and Silla. The earliest of the Three Kingdoms was Koguryeo which occupied a huge territory of Southern Manchuria and Northern Korea, often quite successfully having confronted with Chinese and Mongolian attacks.

The Three Kingdoms are characterized with each Kingdom's unique historical and cultural illustration of Korea. The Koguryeo type of the Korean people is to depict a grotesque continental rationality colored with a tough-minded warring commitment to defense against Chinese and Mongolian attacks. The Baekje type of the Korean people is to depict a soft-minded scholary tradition of Korea influenced by the Oceanic Mildness and sentimentality as Baekje occupied a territory in the Han Riber valley facing the Yellow Ocean. Nevertheless, the Silla type of the Korean people depicts a gradually aggressive character of their territorial expansion. The Silla Tradition is typical of its pursuit of harmony and synthesis. This

pursuit of harmony and synthesis in their ways of life was developed by their grotesque plan to unify the Three Kingdoms.

Silla was located in a southeastern area of the peninsula. In 669 A.D., Silla succeeded in unifying the Three Kingdoms and absorbed the territories, people and cultures of Koguryeo and Baekje. Buddhism flourished during the reign of Silla. Silla was in fact a small state compared to Koguryeo. The unification of Silla is sometimes glorified by some historians because Silla reached the peak of Korean culture and laid the foundation of today's Korea and of her cultural heritage. It seems that the unification was a great loss to Korea because it paved the step stone into the loss of the Manchurian territory of Koguryeo to China. Nevertheless, the socio-cultural and psychological characteristics of the Korean people cannot be mentioned without the historical significance of the Silla's unification which laid the over-all characteristics of the Korean people's mentality. The unification of Silla and the peak of Buddhism that manifested the pursuit of harmony and enlightenment could be said to coincide historically and culturally with the accomplishment and significance of

Silla to depict the unique characteristic of the Korean people imbued with the pursuit of harmony in conflict. The glory of the unified Silla gradually began to wane and Silla was, in the year of 935 A.D., replaced by a new dynasty, Koryeo. Korea was originated from the name of this dynasty.

Koryeo Dynasty was succeeded by the Yi Dynasty which elevated Confucianism to the position of a state religion. It was during the period of the Yi Dynasty that the folk literature of Korea became popular to the common people because of the invention of the Korean alphabet, Han-geul, in 1446 by King Sejong who is known as the Greatest King of Korea's Golden Age. Before the invention of Han-geul, Korean literature was limited only to intellectual aristocratic classes. The Korean writing system, before the invention of Han-geul, was called Idu, a phonetic system of writing Chinese Characters into the Korean spoken language. Idu was extremely difficult and time-consuming to learn. Until the Yi Dynasty in Korean history, it can be said that Korean subculture of Aristocratic literacy had been somewhat isolated from majority Koreans. The rise of popular literature in the Yi Dynasty contributed to a critical formation of Korean

identity in the sense that the identity was being formed through the interrelation between Korean society at large and Korean aristocratic intellectuals. The common people and the society at large became much more sensative to problems of identity than any other academic circles of the Pre-Yi Dynasty Korean tradition.

The leading religions of Korea such as Shamanism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Christianity were, socio-culturally speaking, broken down due to the crisis of identity problem which was involved not with a small group of literary scholars but with the society at large facing problems of interrelation between the common people and the academic circles in the Yi Dynasty. Therefore, the nature of social change and political revolution in the Yi Dynasty was so distinct from other eras of kingdoms that the Yi Dynasty caused such a socio-cultural revolution of Dong Hak Nan, The Rebellion of the Eastern Studies Group. This rebellion was a symbolic movement of the Korean people for the pursuit of Korean identity through the interrelation between the people and the society at large.

Each different characteristic of Koguryeo,

Baekje, and Silla led to the pursuit of harmony and may be able to indicate a geographic and historical feature of the Korean mentality, and yet the further expansion of the Yi Dynasty's identity problem towards the interrelation between the society and the people consistently spurred a critical and academic issue of harmony and synthesis unique to the people of the peninsula.

IV

AN INTELLECTUAL CREATIVITY OF THE KOREAN PEOPLE

The interrelation between the society and the people paved a path into an increasing consciousness of the outside world which led to an increasing consciousness of the inner world, and vice versa. Such an interrelation of consciousness is the socio-cultural foundation of harmony and synthesis to be exprssed in terms of a phenomenological psychology manifested by the Korean people and tradition. A phenomenological Neo-Confucianism was most clearly expounded by the most prominent Yi Dynasty philosopher, Lee Toegye. Neo-Confucianisam is very much alive and challenging not only in Korean intellectual circles but also in the mundane world of Korean society. The socio-cultural understanding of the

Korean people cannot be really accomplished without a mention of Neo-Confucionism in Korea. because it has been embodied by every aspect of Korean culture and Korean political history in light of the writings and activities of Toegye (1501-1570) as a philosopher and a scholar succeeded in bringing forth the intellectual ties among China, Korea and Japan. "Toegye's integrated synthesis is based on his analysis of li (理 ,reason or principle) and his effort to bridge the gap between man and the universe. His analysis of li is two-fold. It consists of an analysis of li of human nature and an analysis of li of the natural world. His synthesis can be characterized by his interpreting this two-fold analysis in terms of jen-yi-li-chih (benevolence, righteousness, propriety and wisdom) and yuan-hen-li-cheng (beginning, prosperity, performance and constancy). This synthesis shows Toegye's philosophical creativity."[1] There are differences in opinion as to Toegye's interpretation of li. In my view, li can be regarded as a noetic faculty of the mind, but it can also be regarded as noematic, because li is not only in the mind but also in the external object. "The very existence of li lies in the unity of noesis and noema".[2] This unity gives phenomenological meaning of creativiey to li (reason) and to Toegye's philosophy of

kyung (the essence of self-respect and loyalty).

V

CONSCIOUSNESS: PRESTIGE, SOCIAL RECOGNITION AND IDENTITY PROBLEM

The typical characteristic of Korean consciousness is manifested in the Neo-Confucian phenomenology of kyung that illuminates a unique study of consciousness in Korean philosophy that "consciousness precedes self-consciousness".[3] Consciousness is formed primarily by the external environment of family and social norms strongly bound with a feeling of loyalty and obligation. The "I" consciousness is in the flux of experience, and the Korean students quite often perceive themselves in view to being desired and wanted by their external environments rather than in view of what they really want. They try to bring some order into their surroundings as they discover a point of stability and security and the flux of an ever-changing external world. This formation of the "I" consciousness in Korean ways of thinking indicates that man finds himself not quite free to create his internal value that is socio-culturally bound with his external values.

Korean traditional behavior-pattern does not stress a pragmatic approach to the society because the priorities of behavior are set for according to previously constructed hierachy of values. For example, most Korean students are interested in becoming politicians, lawyers, medical doctors and professors. They are less interested in money-making alone. Their primary concern is prestige and social status rather than a living comfort. Korean family ideals are extremely high in comparison with their adaptibility to realities of the world. Social recognition is what Korean students quite often aim at. Social recognition becomes a utility for which a hierarchy of values is set. In other words, social recognition is regarded as something tangible rather than intangible. This misguided utilitarian perspective of Korean life had been a phenomenal problem in the period of the Yi Dynasty (1392-1910 A.D.) when the system of civil service examination guaranteed a social recognition and social status or the means to the higher accomplishment of life. This had been an orthodox Confucian influence on Korean life for more than 500 years.

During this period of Korean history, commercilism was socially degraded. Natural science and

engineering courses were also degraded in comparison to the courses on Confucian Classics required for the civil service examinations. The primary prestige of the people was laid upon the literary intellectual circles of Confucian scholars, whereas the military classes tried to match the prestige of Confucian intellectuals.

The history of Korean Confucianism embodies a transformational stage from the orthodox Confucianism based upon literary Confucian Classics to a philosophical Confucianism to grope after a New Dimension of Korean intellectual circles. This groping appeared with a contemporary intellectual and industrial revolution in Korea. The age of a new synthesis came into existence, which is historically and ideolologically compatible with the Korean pursuit of harmony in conflict.

As a man plays multiple roles in the society, his identity is also a composite of so many sub-identies. The problem of the "I" consciousness has much to do with

a composite of sub-identities such as a family member, an organization member, a religious affiliation, a personal interest, etc. The "I" is a part of the objects of consciousness as Sartre explains the self as not as the owner of consciousness but as the object of consciousness. Sartre's mistake in the problem of unconscious consciousness arises from his failure to distinguish between a logical contradiction of and an empirical possibility of unconscious consciousness. However, it is even probable that Sartre is right with regard to Korean national identity in saying that unconscious consciousness is logically and empirically impossible.

The National identity is a homogenious and vivid feeling of the identity in origin and race. It is correct to say that ethnic consciousness and national identity are each added purely in the "I" consciousness, specially since the unification of three kingdoms under Silla in the seventh century. The Koreans among themselves share a long common history, a common attachment to the same culture and language in contrast to the fact that the Americans are of pluralistic ethnic, historical, cultural and linguistic origins. The Koreans developed a strong sense of loyalty to their own tradition, while the American's loyalty is sometimes subject to cross-

pressures. This can be exemplified by the predicament of the Japanese-Americans or the German-Americans during the World War II, etc.

"Several years ago, a Korean professor who teaches at an American University visited a Korean community in the Tashkent area during his tour of the Soviet Union. The residents prepared all kinds of Korean foods to welcome him. A children's choir sang for him traditional Korean folk songs such as Arirang and Toraji. The professor confessed later that he could not hold back his tears."[4] There are many among the Korean descendants who live all over the world and feel the same longing to see the land of their ancestors. In this sense, Koreans are culturally nationalistic people. In Korea, however, much of the Korean ways of thinking is Americanized and in America as well they are fairly well adjusted to the new ways of American life. How far Korean-Americans are transformed into Americans as such invites a critical study of Koreans' short immigration history and their cultural creativity strongly embedded in their historical tradition of harmony in conflict since the unification of Silla.

When a 57 students classroom survey was conducted to write 170 sentences starting with "I", only seven sentences out of 170 made a mention of being Koreans. This does not, however, indicate that Korean students are less aware of being Koreans. Another survey asked the students to write sentences beginning with "a Korean". None of the 57 students made an extra mention of being Korean. Koreans quite often take for granted that there is no need to mention their being Korean. The same students were asked to write sentences beginning with "The North Koreans". They reflected the deep social and cultural difference between South Korea and North Korea. The cultural heterogeneity of South and North Korea has introduced a new element into the Korean people's perception of their tradition and national identity. The division of Korea into two parts was only the beginning of the need for the strong tie among the people in South Korea, paving the path into an ever-increasing search for the constructive and creative New Philosophy of Korea. The spirit of a creative New Dimension of Korean Philosophy has much to influence a Korean-Americans' structure of thought in view of their continuous reflection on the greatest possible ethnic Americanism.

VI

SELF-PERCEPTION: AN EMPHASIS ON A UNITY OF SUBJECT AND OBJECT

In view of a link between self-perception and group consciousness, the Korean people show that they are living not in the old age of Nationalism but in the age of an international pride and understanding. Somewhat a negative self-perception is inter-related with a growth of relative patriotism. "More than 10 percent of both the citizen and student groups agreed to accept the statement: I regret the very fact that I was even born in this world."[5] To the statement: "I consider myself a useless person", "84 percent of the students and 82 percent of the citizens are positive that they are useful as human beings."[6] To the statement: "I consider myself as a human being", 30 percent of the students either accepted or failed to reject the statement that he was a failure as a human being".[7] To the statement, "I am generally optimistic about my personal future", "only 53 percent of the citizens and 63 percent of the students feel optimistic of their personal future".[8]

From the above survey, a conclusion leads to the fact that the Korean people have their negative self-

perception from the point of view of their socio-economic success despite the fact that the majority of the Korean people feel morally useful as a human being. As far as the Korean peoples' national pride is concerned, it is very moderate. Chauvinism was prevelent in traditional Korean society, but it is practically disappearing, because they feel that Korea is the land of harmony in conflict in the pursuit of a universal value to transcend the boundary of the Korean Territory. Korea stands against the threat from North Korea Communist attack; yet spiritually the Korean people are cosmopolitan in the pursuit of harmony; but psychologically they feel negative and inadequate of themselves, bringing forth many dreams ahead of their lives.

On the other hand, Korean negative self-perception bears its philosophical implication: (1) the ecstatic unity of existence as a moral criterion and (2) the naturalistic existentialism of a unity of subjectivity and objectivity.

We must make a careful distinction between seeing as "appears to be" and experiencing as "being with". It has been a philosophical debate whether we see a

sense-datum or a thing itself. This philosophical question developed profound theories of knowledge in the West; and the question was historically divided into two inquiries: (1) What do we see? and (2) What do we mean by perception? Neither of these questions has to do with a rationalistic psychology of man, the questions focus fundamentally on a history of empiricism.

In Korean philosophical tradition, seeing is distinguished from experiencing which is a unique Korean or Oriental concept of ecstatic unity. Kant asked, "What makes experience possible?" In dealing with the question, Kant developed the possibility of synthetic a priori proposition, categories of understanding and schematism. Korean philosophical question is: "How is total experiencing possible?" This question is, in a strictly limited sense of knowing, not an epistemic question but an ontological and psychological question of "to be". But the inquiry into total experiencing and total being laid the foundation upon the rationalistic psychology of harmony unique to the Korean people. This inquiry on how to be was philosophically originated from Korean traditional pursuit of harmony of metaphysics, epistenology and ethics. In other words, metaphysics epistemology and ethics came into one total super-science

of man in the name of a philosophical understanding li (reason).

"In Korean language, reason is closely tied with nature. Yi hsung (reason in Korean) literally means reason-nature. This unity of reasons and nature dominates Korean ways of thinking. It is quite often expressed in Korean that the mind sees an object. This is a rationalistic aspect of Korean thought."[9] A historical difference between rationalism and empiricism is that rationalism seeks a sort of unity in ma.. whereas empiricism advocates disunity and a bundle of association. If Korean thought is rationalistic, what do we mean by such a unity? "Unity is the foundation of Confucian simplicity."[10] It is not a synthesis of opposites in the sense of Hegel's logic. The idea of unity elaborates similarities and differences between Taoism and Confucianism. The Confucian unity is conscious unity, whereas the Taoist unity is intuitive unity. Chih (知) means conscious knowledge according to Confucianism, but it means intuitive knowledge according to Taoism. Both Confucianism and Taoism are intellectually active and popular in Korean society. What is a characteristic of Korean concept of unity? The writer has already pointed out a phenomenological meaning of li. In brief, Korean

unity is characterized with a phenomenological sense of unity which has a great deal of influence on Korean life. Conscious unity is penetrated by the power of li. Since li cannot be empirically generalized without conscious knowledge of unity, li is an origin of knowledge and conscious unity has an origin in li. Li engenders Korean Confucian phenomenology of transcendent immanence, which is conceived of in the phenomenology of Dufrenne that in the field of subjective and objective a priori the concept of a priori is delineated through aesthetic experience. Aesthetic experience is the very possibility of a unity between subject and object. With an emphasis on this aesthetic unity, the Korean people consider life as art that makes aesthetic experience alive in a daily life.

The aesthetic unity requires a mode of living in such a manner that man ought to stand outside of himself. Man should not be selfish. This is a moral feeling in traditional Korean society. "Standing outside of oneself" has its philosophical implication of ex sistere. Ex implies negativity or negation, while sistere implies positivity or affirmation. All aspects of human phenomena are exemplified in terms of the relation between negativity and positivity. "Standing outside of oneself"

indicates that "standing" is a positive concept, while "outside of oneself" is a negative concept. Human value can be highly perceived through this positive negative relation which lays the foundation of a new philosophy as expounded in terms of "the naturalistic existentialism of the writer".[11] To be in perfection of the naturalistic existentialism is the pursuit of harmony as can be embodied by an ecstatic unity of man which leads to the innermost creativity and to the art of living in virtue of an intellectual urderstanding of Korean Americans.

VII

AN EMOTIONAL BEHAVIOR PATTERN

"Interpersonal relations in Korean society are characterized by emotion, affectivity, friendship, faith, and fidelity. The Korean usually finds himself, only in affectionate relationships with other people. He finds the value of life only when the totality or, at least, a part of his own "self" is associated with others, and a totality or a part of another's "self" is shared with him".[12] The Korean people sometimes do not distinguish between "my" and "our". They like to use the words "we" and "our" instead of "I" and "my". To make mention of

one's wife, one says "our wife" rather than "his wife or my wife". An emotional behavior-pattern emphasizes uniformity of group members based on a homogeneity of beliefs and attitudes.

According to the opinion survey made as to attitudes of 323 Korean bureaucrats, the following facts of their psychology are found to be typical: (1) their main concern of 86% was to maintain proper relations with other people; (2) they are very sensitive about what other people say and think about them; (3) 19% of them pay the most serious attention to the improvement of their jobs; (4) they are authoritarian and emotionally humanistic; and (5) 61% of them regard honesty and sincerity as the best way to promote themselves in comparision to only 2% of them who consider patience and concession as the best way to success. Human relations are the essential phenomenon for the success and concern of Korean bureaucrats. Their emphasis on human relations somewhat stems from the Korean family system which emphasizes warm hearts rather than a cool function of reason. The prevalence of emotional humanism is subject to the important social condition of Korea such as the family system, economic insecurity and anxiety, and irrational elements of the Korean people. "Rational treatment of

things is sometimes interpreted as inhumane behavior".[13] Personal relations are dominating. In such a bureaucracy, it can be said that rights and duties are defined not accordingly with job description but in terms of personal relationships. At the same time, personal relations are strongly bound with ceremonial politeness. Emotional behavior-patterns sometimes lead to such an unstable and extremely fragile situation, that the administrative process may lack rationality, a moral sense of being on time, organic unity and integration, and yet the social conflicts of the people are avoided by virtue of their traditional pursuit of harmony.

VIII

KOREAN FAMILY SYSTEM: "FAMILISM", LOYALTY, THE SEXES, AND KINSHIP

The family system of the Korean people provides an essential understanding of their socio-cultural characteristics. North Korea and South Korea have two entirely different family lives. However, "familism" and loyalty may embody the traditional concept of Korean family system. The characteristics of the Korean family life manifest the Confucian concept of filial piety, an

emphasis on father-son relationship rather than daughter preference, and family pride based on ancestors' social status and achievements.

In the traditional Korean family, "there was a considerable strain between the mother-in-law and the daughter-in-law."[14] The daughter-in-law was treated as someone who came from outside. Often there was a strain between the daughter-in-law and her sister-in-law. A Korean expression of marriage, "chulga", explains a traditional custom that a woman joins her husband's family by her marriage, but not vice versa. There is a Korean proverb, "Treat a son-in-law always as a honor guest to the house of the married daughter's parents."

There were some aspects of female inferiority in traditional Korean society, which has been gradually fading out. But an apparent male-chauvinism in traditional Korean society does not imply the unequality of the sexes. There was a high respect for the family-role and love of mother in which a mother's family importance is even sometimes greater than a father's economic responsibility for the family. Some traditional Korean literatures narrate a mother's love in terms of "the height of a mountain and the depth of the ocean".[15] The

Korean love of nature symbolizes the height of a mountain and the depth of the ocean as the union of man and nature and as the most mysterious expression of the union. Therefore, a mother's love can be compared to the source of the highest accomplishment of a family. This implies that a mother's love is superior to a father's love in the family. The depth understanding of the Korean family system does not lead to male-chauvinism but to the utmost respect for female as the essential foundation of equality of the sexes without neglecting division of labor based on the sexes. However, father-son relationship rather than daughter preference is emphasized because of the two-fold reasons: (1) continuity of the family love, and (2) an economic responsibility laid upon father and son.

In the Korean society, "sexual affairs without an intention to marry are critized in public sessions, but is generally tacitly approved between engaged couples".[16] It is the traditional teaching of Confucianism to put the barrier on free socializing by the different sexes. But this barrier is fading out in the contemporary city life, and yet the Korean woman is somewhat shy in free socializing. This is partly because there is a lack in public occasions for free socializing.

Kinship played a strong role in Korean life and specially in village affairs. Kinship is an extension of "familism", which is even extended to the state-level. It will be worthwhile to remark such a strong influence of family system even in the Communist North Korea that North Korea may be referred to as a "family-state" in contrast to the Marxist doctrine of communism. Family is the most essential and critical criterion of socio-economic and political studies in Korea. It was most definitely so in traditional Korean society. The quantity and quality of accomplishments made by an ancestor can be considered as a primary factor of obtaining a descent social position in traditional Korean society.

In contemporary South Korean society that is going through a sort of industrial revolution, tradional aspects of family units are fading out from the point of view of an industrial life. Nevertheless, moral aspects of family in South Korea is very strong in contrast to a revolutionized concept of filial piety in North Korea where filial piety is accepted only if it coincides with the interest of the people and the community. In other words, filial piety is no longer a concern of morality in North Korea, and yet it is definitely a concern of

morality in South Korea.

Now, we may ask, "What is good and bad about Korean family system?" Family can be contrasted to and compared with an individual. The concept of family is self-sufficient, whereas an individual concept lacks its self-sufficiency and needs to be fulfilled by virtue of the family accomplishment. This aspect of family and individual lives in traditional Korean society may require a psychological study of the Korean people that they feel often inadequate about themselves, feel void, and seek an external advice of "mudang" or superstition. Self-sufficient people do not need an external help. What is most significant of all, the Korean people developed a moral standard of loyalty as a criterion of an individual self-realization and filial piety. In that respect, South Korea is morally superior to North Korea. In respect to family system, the Korean people are loyal people. The concept of loyalty has a two-fold meaning; a bad connotation of loyalty in North Korea is that the concept is limited to the Communist "family"-state in primacy of the ruler-subject relationship, integration of which extends beyond the boundaries of kinship; a good aspect of loyalty in South Korea is that loyalty expands human perception to the higher moral value of self-realization.

The higher value-search through loyalty is a most humanistic and moral endeavor lacking in most of the western hemisphere.

IX

ETHNIC NATIONALISM

According to a survey made in Korea, the statement was; "He who is all ready to die for his country is the most admired person". This statement was "accepted positively only by 51% of the students and 80% of the citizens. Those who outright rejected the statement were 32% and 13% respectively".[17] How many Koreans are willing to die for their country? "42% of the students and 73% of the citizens agreed with the statement that they are ready to die for their country if needed, 36% of the students were undecided. Another 20% rejected it. Of the citizens, only 18% were undecided and 7% rejected it."[18] From these data, it can be said that patriotism is not an ultimate but a relative concept of the Koreans. National consciousness of patriotism is stronger among the citizens than among the young students in Korea.

What about Korean Americans respectively to national consciousness? The first Korean immigrants came to Hawaii in 1903. More than 1000 Koreans left Hawaii for California between 1903 and 1907. In 1910 the largest Korean population amounted to only 4,500 in the Islands of Hawaii. Despite the strong nationalistic movement ever since 1903, the strong factionalism between Syngman Rhee and Pak Yogwan could not be avoided. The factionalism in 1919 had split the Korean community into the two groups. Even after nationalism became insignificant after the independence of the Republic of Korea in 1945, factional aspects of the Korean communities are still phenomenal so that the splits of public-minded organizations and the making of new organizations cannot go without being mentioned. Personal patriotism and factionalism are the main expression of Korean nationalism in America from 1903 to 1945. It is the spirit of Korean philosophy to fight against the phenomenal influences of factionalism on Korean life.

"It has frequently been said that nationalism is the modern man's religion. Having become critical of the supernaturalism of most of the historic religions or finding their idealism too remote from the pressing problems of life, the modern men grope for a cause which

can stir their imagination and challenge their courage. To such a restless soul, the support of the fatherland of the blood brotherhood offers a goal and an object worthy of being called religious."[19] Nationalism may be an outdated concept for the contemporary generation, however, it is true that the Korean people become most religious regardless of what the meaning of religion stood for. The religious character of the Korean people provides a good sense of the purpose in life which embodies the peculiar Korean mentality in America. Wilma Sur quotes in Korean Ethnic Nationalism, "The ethnic group in American society became not a survival from the age of mass immigration but a new social form".[20] Korean ethnic nationalism implies the formation of a new social form and of new ideals in the process of Americanization. Nationalism prior to the independence of Korea in 1945 was regarded as patriotism. Nationalism in America is no longer to be confused with patriotism but ethnic nationalism in America at the present time constitutes a meaning of the greatest possible Americanism in light of expanding American values to all parts of the world. Ethnic nationalism is necessitated to require an ever-increasing dimension of Americanism in the domain of a multicultural community.

X

KOREAN-AMERICAN CULTURAL RELATIONS

The main thesis of Korean Americans in the United States rests on philosophical meaning and sensitivity of creativity applied to Korean wisdom and life in America. How do Koreans perceive American culture and ways of life? Is there any cognitive process of Americanism peculiar to Korean-Americans? The main paths of Korean-American cultural relations can be divided into the six factors: Namely, (1) Protestantism, (2) introduction of American democracy into Korea, (3) contact with American GI culture, (4) intellectual import of American culture through students educated in America, (5) mass media such as American picture films and TV films, and (6) business tourism. These factors still provide an interesting illustration of Korean-American lives in America. It is an continuous effort from Korea to America to develop Korean-American cultural relations. It is phenomenal that there are nearly two hundred Protestant churches in the County of Los Angeles. There still exist GI influences on Korean-Americans and Korean-American intellectual circles of former foreign students who became professional experts in America. Again, there

is a phenomenal growth and speed of Korea Town in Los Angeles influenced by businessmen. Korean-American cultural phenomena can be mentioned in terms that religious, military, intellectual and commercial aspects of the Korean-American cultural continuity must be unique to the cognitive process of Americanism among Korean-Americans as distinguished from other Asian-Americans.

In 1882, Korea concluded the first treaty of amity and commerce with the United States. In the late 19th century missionary activities were very ardent in Korea. Koreans accepted Protestanism not merely as a religion but as a path into social reforms. American political thought in Korea was propogated by American Protestantism that advocated liberalism and democracy. Christanity provided, as previously discussed, a spiritual base for Korean-American nationalists movement against Japan during the period of 1903 and the World War II.

In view of the GI American culture, Korean-American relations was not a sort of in-depth cultural exchange. The main influence of the GI culture was inclined toward the materalistic and individualistic

way of living in contrast to an intellectual appreciation of American culture. Of course, it would be exceptional that the GI intermarriage with Koreans paved a path into an in-depth cultural relation between Korea and the United States.

However, it was American-educated students that the intellectual creativity and understanding of Americanism was introduced not only to Koreans in Korea but also to Korean-Americans in America. According to Korean Ministry of Education statistics, "a total of 12,370 Korean students went abroad for study between 1945 and 1973, and of these 10,789 went to the United States. By the end of 1973, 2,968 students had returned home after their study abroad, including 703 who had earned doctorate degrees. These Ph-D holders were broken down by country where they earned the degree into 417 from the United States, 96 from Japan, 77 from West Germany, 25 from the United Kingdom, and 24 from France. Some 70 to 80 percent of these returned students from foreign countries who hold Ph.D. or Master Degree work at educational institutions and the rest at governmental and business organizations."[21]

About 75% of Korean immigrants into the United

States have college education or advances degrees. Most of them have already been influenced by American culture. Their aptitude and adjustment to American ways of life is very highly appreciative of American culture. They express their strong interest in pragmatism, democracy and rationalism yet, there is a tinge of prejudice against materialism and individualism.

What are the media of Koreans' perceiving American culture? Through the survey of 631 Koreans, the following was observed.[22]

Rank	Course	No. of People	Percentage
1	Mass Media	375	59.42
2	School Education	90	14.26
3	Books	79	12.52
4	Films	48	7.61
5	Personal Contact	15	2.38
6	Churches	2	0.32
	Others	17	2.70
	No Response	5	0.79
	Total	631	100.01

Mass media, education and books are very much Americanized in Korea. What about Korean immigrants after they arrive in the United States: What is their disappointment? Is there any need to change their cognitive and appreciative understanding of American culture? Much of American culture has been beautified. When it is met with reality

much of our Korean understanding of American culture has been distorted toward materialism and individualism which they traditionally hated. They find themselves on the verge of becoming most materialistic and individualistic. Therefore, their intellectual pursuit of beauty and harmony together with beautification of America may be weakened. Korean-American cultural relations should enrich and strengthen ingenious creativity of Korean-Americanism. The refreshing cultivation of Korean-American cultural relations should not be jeopardized because of no time to develop positive cognitive and appreciative thinking among themselves. The more penetrative we become into an understanding of Korean-American cultural perspective, the more creative and real we become for the awareness of better Americans.

XI

CONCLUSION

Korean-Americans ought to be diverse from other Asian ethnic groups not only in their motive for immigration but also in their psychological and cultural backgrounds. The reader should be benefited in

recognition of a methodological vindication as to what we mean by understanding Korean-Americans. A profound ethnic study of Korean-Americans requires a new methodological projection of thought on the basis of a mutual East-West understanding in asking what Americans can learn from Koreans and furthermore in asking how Koreans are to become Americanized in the name of Americanism inspired by mankind throughout the history of American pioneer-forefathers. We also have to ask what would be an epistemic justification of a methodological change for the fresh ideal perspective of ethnic studies on Korean-Americans; Namely, a new dimension of naturalistic existentialism and sociological phenomenology that explores the continuity and expansion of Korean-Americans' life-styles from traditional society to contemporary American society.

The most critical crisis of Korean-Americans is a breakdown of their family life caused by a strong American influence on a small independent family life that children, after their marriag., become entirely independant and often detached from their parents and the breakdown caused by social and economic conditions that both parents have to work for 12 hours a day to meet the high cost of

American living and that it is often impossible to find a spacious apartment to live together with all the family members so that they have to divide a large Korean family into two apartments.

The Los Angeles Korean Community survey held for 400 relatively new immigrants in summer 1978 indicates that housing problems and the breakdown of family life are most detramental to the Korean virtue and pride of family tradition. It is educationally and culturally advisable to keep up Korean-Americans' traditional value of a high family morality that a good family is the source of a happy society and of an individual well-being.

The survey also shows the following aspects:

(1) Koreans are idealogically inclined;
(2) They are artistically susceptible;
(3) They are inclined to be authoritarian;
(4) They like to talk about others;
(5) 85% of the survey participants express their worry about a loose change in their strong traditional family tie;
(6) They are more individualistic than Koreans in Korea;

(7) A conflict of Korean-Americans lies in a contradiction between individualism and a strong reliance on others;

(8) They are strongly public-minded;

(9) They tend to sacrifice their traditional value of social recognition and prestige for a materialistic comfort;

(10) Korean women tend to enjoy their equality of the sexes by working hard;

(11) Some newly arriving Korean immigrants should improve themselves for being on time;

(12) They are sensitive to seasonal changes;

(13) They are fond of recreation and entertainment, being artistically talented;

(14) They seek security instead of fame which they used to enjoy most of all;

(15) 65% of the survey participants do not feel home-sick because they are too busy with their work;

(16) 60% of the survey participants wish to have the Los Angeles Korea Town decorated with a unique Korean touch of ornamental gates to attract the tourists, and the rest of 40% prefer the strictly American mainstream culture;

(17) Koreans do not like to joke;

(18) The main cause of anxiety rest more on housing problems and sudden changes in life than on social discrimination;

(19) The survey shows a change of Korean-Americans that Koreans in Korea used to emphasize friendship and honesty as the best policy for success, while Koreans in America emphasize happy family and wealth as the best policy for success;

(20) Most of Korean-Americans feel an anxiety of being deteriorated in their traditional value of respect for the elderly people as well as the tradition of filial piety.

(21) 55% of the participants agree that Koreans tend to be skeptical of whether or not something is true and real;

(22) The majority of the survey participants agree that Koreans have superiority complex and social stigma attached to divorce, going through a revolutional change in their attitude and concept of divorce.

The above findings of the survey vidicating that Korean-Americans are living in the transitional period of a search for economic security and intellectual creativity

from the old to the new and from the new to the old, the process of Americanization is to go through various stages of assimilation and synthesis.

From the ostensive and academic viewpoint of characteristics of the Korean people, their ways of thinking are humanistically emotional, morally polite, goal-directed, psychologically optimistic but not fun-loving, existentially irrational and aesthetic, traditionally religious, and historically unique in their pursuit of harmony in conflict; All these characteristics in brief should not deteriorate a Korean wisdom of family that "a motherly love" is the height of a mountair and the depth of the Pacific Ocean, giving phenomenological meaning to a new methodology of ethnic studies in continuity and expansion of the old and the new; and the total vision of Korean-Americans in view of the fresh ideal perspectives of a multicultural community is to be pursued through an aesthetic delineation, as discussed previously, of subject and object for the greatest possible Americanism to be enhanced and enriched.

FOOTNOTES

1. San Sung Lee, "Studies on the Learning of Toegye". Journal of Chinese Philosophy 3 (1975) p.87.

2. ibid., p.88.

3. Young-Ho Lee, "National Identity in the Koreans 'I' Consciousness", Korea Journal, Vol.18-No.3, March 1978, p.5.

4. ibid., p.10.

5. Young-Ho Lee, "The Korean People's National Consciousness: An Analysis of Survey Data", Korea Journal, Vol.18, No. 1, January 1978, P.47.

6. ibid., p.45.

7. loc.cit., p.45.

8. loc.cit., p.45.

9. San Sung Lee, NATURE AND EXISTENCE: A Reconciliation of Philosophy East and West, pp.14-15.

10. ibid., p.50.

11. See the writer's explication of naturalistic existentialism in NATURE AND EXISTENCE.

12. Wan-Ki Paik, "Emotional Humanism and Administrative Behavior in Korean Society", KOREA JOURNAL, Vol.18, No.3, March 1978, p.23.

13. ibid., p.27.

14. ibid., p.38.

15. ibid., p.38.

16. ibid., p.39.

17. Young-Ho Lee, op.cit., Korea Journal, Vol.18, No.1 January 1978, p.47

18. loc.cit. p.47.

19. Wilmar Sur, "Korean Ethnic Nationalism", Hawaii Pono Journal, University of Hawaii Press, November 1970, p.26.

20. Wilmar Sur, op.cit., p.22.

21. Hy-Sop Lim, "A Study of Korean-American Cultural Relations", KOREA JOURNAL, Vol.18, No.6, June 1978, p.9.

22. ibid., p.12.